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tric facts to guide us to laws. Even the little that has been done in the last few years, respecting cyclonic storms, has given birth to a system of hurricane navigation, that has saved British property and British life to an incalculable amount. But I feel that you think, with me, that we should disgrace ourselves if we took such humble ground. We hold that whatever adds to true knowledge, whatever widens the grasp of enlightened intellect, is precious ; whatever opens a new view of the secrets of divine power and the majesty of creative wisdom is glorious, is inestimable."

Dr. Petrie read an account of the Cross of Cong.

" In offering to the Academy some account of the very interesting remain of antiquity now before us, and which is popularly known as the ' Cross of Cong,' I am but fulfilling a promise made long ago to the noble-minded and highly gifted man by whom it was presented to our institution ; and while oppressed with the sad recollections which the performance of this duty naturally awakens, it is a great consolation to me, that I feel the time and the occasion to be peculiarly appropriate to my task, and such as he would have himself desired, namely, when we are honoured with the presence at our meeting of the illustrious representative of our gracious monarch in Ireland, the viceroy whom we recognise as the friend of our institution, and the zealous and enlightened supporter of every pursuit and object tending to the social, moral, and intellectual improvement of the portion of the empire placed under his peculiar care.

" It would be wholly unbecoming in one of my humble intellectual station to offer any panegyrical observations on the general character of the eminent man to whom we are indebted for the possession of this remarkable remain, a man whose death has left a blank not easily to be filled, even in

this institution of science and learning, and it is happily not necessary that I should attempt it; but, as one who had the happiness to have been honoured for many years with his intimacy, or, as I may say, his most affectionate regard, it will not, I trust, be deemed presumptuous if I allude and endeavour to do justice to those peculiar features of his mind which led him to present this valuable monument of antiquity to our Academy, and the possession of which obtained for him the affections of many who might otherwise have only revered him for his acquirements and genius. I allude especially to that large capacity of mind which enabled and led him to place a just value upon knowledge of every kind, however foreign to his own immediate studies and pursuits, and that characteristic feature of a noble human heart, an ardent love of country, generating an impassioned zeal for its advancement and welfare: I repeat that it was to the existence of such qualities in Dr. M'Cullagh that the Academy owes their acquisition of this historical memorial, a memorial in the possession of which any civilized community might well feel proud.

“ But, to understand and appreciate the value of this gift to the Academy, it will be necessary to offer a few words on the origin and formation of the museum of which it is the most valuable and interesting feature.

“ When I had the honour to be elected a member of this, the highest intellectual institution of Ireland, I found it, as I may well say, without a library and without a museum, without both of which, according to my young thoughts, such an institution was very imperfect; and with, perhaps, something of the rashness of youth, and particularly on my becoming a member of the Council, I applied my mind to the effecting of objects which appeared to me so desirable. At this time the books of the Academy, which were preserved in a room at the top of the house, in addition to three valuable Irish MSS., consisted almost exclusively of a collection of old mineralogical works, which had been bequeathed to the Academy by

one of its illustrious Presidents, the celebrated Mr. Kirwan; and their antiquities, of a few uncared-for remains, lying on the dusty floor of the room in which these books were kept. It was these scanty materials that formed the nucleus of the library now so rich in its stores of manuscript Irish literature, and of its museum, of which it is not, perhaps, saying too much that, in its way, though only in its infancy, as I conceive, it is unequalled by any collection in Europe.

“ It is not to be supposed that in a body constituted as this Academy is, for the advancement of studies and interests, which many would be likely to conceive to be not only distinct but even hostile to each other, it is not, I say, to be supposed that the objects on which my mind was bent could be carried out without a struggle and a contest. That struggle was in truth a hard one, and though I had the generous support of many of the most distinguished men in the Academy, and of these I feel it my duty to acknowledge my obligations to Sir William Betham, as one of my most zealous and efficient aiders, it is due to the memory of Dr. M'Cullagh to state, that, but for the sustainment which in the furtherance of these objects I received from his great influence, intelligence, and energy, they could never have been effected to any considerable extent. It was expressly to forward these objects in the Academy, by a splendid example of liberality and zeal, that Dr. M'Cullagh had this cross purchased and presented it to the Academy. Having some years previously, during a tour in Connaught, had an opportunity of seeing this beautiful remain, I communicated to my friend my opinion as to its great historical interest and value; and, without having ever seen it himself, or having received any further information relative to it than that which I had communicated to him, he, who could not be called a rich man, determined, if possible, to become the purchaser, and this without any regard to its cost, even though it might have been five times the amount of that considerable sum for which it was obtained.

“I am aware that there are still in this Academy, as there have been, no doubt, from its foundation, men of distinguished learning and celebrity in their own pursuits, who will not sympathize in the opinions and objects which I and others have so ardently endeavoured to uphold ; and that there are others, not less eminent, who, without going so far as to express hostility to these objects, maintain that the formation of an antiquarian museum and a library of the ancient literature of the country should never have been attempted or be continued by a body so poor as the Academy unfortunately is. But it should be remembered that it is not usually the rich men or the rich institutions that effect the most useful and noble objects, and that there is a poverty of the mind which is more fatal to the success of difficult undertakings than even that of the purse. And it appears to me that, with such small pecuniary means at our disposal, we who have formed such a collection of our ancient literary remains, and still more, who in our national museum have done that which has not yet been attempted in wealthy England, have given a striking evidence of this fact.

“And I would ask of those who still are of opinion that the carrying out of these objects is of no value to the country, is it of no value that in a country long torn by faction and prejudice, and apparently lapsing year by year into deeper barbarism, we have attracted into our body, by the cultivation of these pursuits, the intelligent and sober-minded of all shades of opinion, and made them known to and esteemed by each other?—that, in a country without a national literature, and in which the history of the past was only referred to through a distorted medium to serve the purposes of faction, the cultivation of these pursuits has led to a true knowledge of our history, never again to be thus perverted? Is it of no value that our collections, literary and monumental, and the uses made of them, have raised us in the esteem of those in the more fortunate portions of the empire, and have made the

Academy known and respected wherever civilization exists ? that those collections have attracted, and daily attract visitors to our city ?—that, in place of the ignorant trashery of the so-called historical and antiquarian literature of preceding years, we have now the publications of the two Archæological Societies, whose works would do honour to any country, and are most essential to the knowledge of the history and literature of Europe ?—that we also see yearly issue from our native Press works upon our local histories, whose typographical beauty is only surpassed by the excellence of the matter contained in them ? And, again, is it of no value that our museum has been the means of disseminating a better taste in the fine arts, and given birth to new branches of the more elegant trades in our city ? And is it of no value that at the eleventh hour we have snatched from destruction, and placed in a safe asylum, where they are accessible to the world, so much of the scattered remains of our ancient arts and literature ?

“ And yet these, after all, are but a few of the results which have followed, and are sure to follow the formation of these collections. But though I feel that I am trespassing upon the patience of the Academy, there is yet one other result, which, both in its application to the past and to the future, it would be culpable if I did not notice. I would remind the Academy that it is to these collections we owe the honour conferred upon us by that enlightened and most worthy Prince, who, within the past year, examined and expressed his approbation of them ; and that the possession of these collections leads us to look forward with hope that they may prove an object of attraction, and possibly of gratification, to that most illustrious and accomplished lady to whom we owe so much loyalty, gratitude, and respectful love.

“ If, then, the effecting of these objects be considered worthy of approbation, as I trust it will be by at least the great majority of the Academy, let us never forget, whenever our eyes may rest on this beautiful historical memorial, how much

of their success was consequent upon the aid of its donor; and let us hope that as our institution does not, so it never shall want for minds as large, as generous, and as enlightened as his, to sustain and carry on those objects which he deemed so desirable and so worthy of its support. The forming of such collections in Ireland is, in truth, no childish or unworthy pursuit. They are essential not only to the history of Christian civilization since the Roman times, but to the history of that earliest family of the great Indo-Germanic race, who have left the traces of their footsteps in every part of Europe, and found their last refuge in the British Islands.

“Trusting that these prefatory remarks will not be deemed irrelevant to the object I have undertaken, I have now to request attention to the shrine itself, which, as it is before us for inspection, it is not necessary that I should occupy the time of the Academy by any minutely detailed description of it.

“Its history, and the nature of the relic which it was made to enshrine, is, fortunately for us, preserved by legible and intelligible inscriptions, which are carved along its sides. From the first of these inscriptions, which is in Latin, but in the Irish letters, and which is twice inscribed upon the case, we learn that the relic, which was placed beneath the large circular ball of crystal in the centre of the cross, was, as believed to be, no less than a portion of the cross on which the Maker of the world was crucified.

“This inscription reads thus:

“‘✠ hac cruce crux tegitur qua pax conditor orbis.’

“The remaining inscriptions, which are in the same Irish characters, but in the Irish language, preserve the names of the persons who were concerned in the making of the ‘*ḡreppa*,’ or shrine of the relic. They consist of four divisions or compartments, and of these the first reads as follows:

“‘*Opait do Muirebúch u Dubthaig do renoir Épeno.*’

“That is, in English, ‘A prayer for Muireadach O’Duffy, the senior of Ireland.’

“ This inscription, it should be observed, is mutilated by the loss of a part of the moulding which contained three or four words; but there can be no doubt as to what those words expressed, from the inscription which next follows, namely, that the shrine was made for him.

The second division of the inscriptions reads thus:

“ ‘Οποιτ δο Τηρδελbach u Chonchabhay, δο ριγ Ερηνδ Ια ρανδερρναδ ιν γερρα.’

“ Or, in English, ‘A prayer for Turlough O’Conor, for the king of Ireland, for whom [that is, at whose desire or expense] this shrine was made.’

“ The third compartment reads thus—

“ ‘Οποιτ δο Domnull Mac Flannacan u Dubthaigh, επρεορ Connacht, δο chomayba chomman acup chiapan ια neppnad ιν γερρα.’

“ That is, ‘A prayer for Donnel, the son of Flannagan O’Duffy, bishop of Connaught, and coarb (or representative) of St. Comman and St. Ciaran, under whose superintendence this shrine was made.’ By which we are to understand that this bishop was abbot of St. Ciaran’s great monastery at Clonmacnoise, and of St. Comman’s monastery at Roscommon, which gave its name to the county.

“ The fourth and last compartment of these inscriptions is not the least valuable, though it only preserves the name of a person of inferior station, that of the artificer who made the shrine, as it proves incontestibly what without it might and probably would have been deemed doubtful, namely, that the shrine was of native workmanship. It reads as follows:

“ ‘Οποιτ δο Maelpu Mac braddan u Echan δο ριγιν ιν γερρα.’

“ Or, ‘A prayer for Maelisa, the son of Braddan O’Echan, who made this shrine.’

“ Of the different persons whose names are thus recorded, with the exception of the artist or maker, of whom no other account has been found, many historical notices are preserved in our authentic annals; and one of these authorities also re-

cords the bringing of the piece of the cross into Ireland, and the making of this shrine for its preservation. It occurs in the Annals of Innisfallen, at the year 1123, the year in which the first General Council of Lateran was held, during the pontificate of Pope Calixtus, and is to the following effect :

“ ‘ A bit of the true cross came into Ireland, and was enshrined at Roscommon by Turlough O’Conor.’

“ This entry in our annals gives us all the information that is preserved to us in reference to this relic, which was probably the first of the kind that was sent to Ireland, although we are told by O’Halloran of an earlier gift of a piece of the holy cross, by Pope Pascal II., to Murtoth, the grandson of Brian Boroimhe, and Monarch of Ireland, ‘with opposition,’ in the year 1110 ; and that in honour of this piece of the cross, the Abbey of Holy Cross, in Tipperary, was founded about sixty years afterwards. But, as O’Halloran gives us no authority for this statement, and though a piece of the cross was preserved there, and still exists, it is more probable that it was not sent into Ireland till the time of the erection of that monastery, which was in 1169.

“ It is scarcely necessary to state that it was during the reign of Turlogh O’Conor, and about the period that this piece of the cross was received in Ireland, that successful efforts were made by the Papal See to obtain a reformation in church discipline, and a more absolute domination in ecclesiastical matters in Ireland than it had enjoyed previously ; and we may perhaps very fairly suppose the present of this relic to have been a precursor to those agitations in the Irish Church, and look upon it as an historical memorial of those great events which followed.

“ Of the life and acts of Turlogh O’Conor, or, as he was called, Turlogh the Great, the person at whose instance this shrine was made, our annals preserve abundant notices. His history is, in fact, essentially that of the country over which he ruled, either as King of Connaught or Monarch of Ireland, for no less a period than fifty years. He was one of those

provincial princes whom the Irish historians denominated *Ríche go bhpeaqabhpá*, or 'kings with opposition,' or whose authority was disputed, and who, as O'Flaherty writes, were in possession of sovereign power, though not absolute in regard of the projects laid by rival princes to undermine them. In other words, he was one, and perhaps the greatest, of those bold, ambitious, and unscrupulous men, who, following in the track of the great military usurper, Brian Boromhe, broke through the principle of legitimate succession which had preserved the monarchy in the Hy-Niall race for a period of 700 years; and thus involved the country in such a state of anarchy, disunion, and feebleness, that it became an easy prey to the ambition of the second Henry, in the reign of his feeble and less talented son, Roderick.

"His history is thus sketched by his descendant, Charles O'Connor, of Belanagare :

" 'Turlogh O'Connor was at this time (anno 1150) the most powerful prince of Ireland. He disposed of the two provinces of Munster to his own liking at several times, availing himself of the virulent wars in that country between the O'Brians and the Mac Carthys. He was also in almost a perpetual hostility with Murchad O'Malachlyn, king of Meath, formerly his father-in-law. Mac 'Morogh (the king of Leinster) he often subdued, never feared. He had been stopped in his career of power by Murchertach O'Lochlin, king of the North Hy-Niall, but never subdued. He raised the power of Connaught higher than any of his predecessors, reigned over that province fifty years, and died with the character of an able prince in the year 1156.'

"An able prince he was unquestionably, but, as his recorded acts show, a cruel and unprincipled one. In our times we cannot read without a shudder of a father imprisoning one of his sons for a long period, and blinding another. It should be stated, however, to his honour, that he was magnificent and generous, and that he appears to have been a zealous promoter of the arts of civilized life. Of this feature in his

character we have evidences in some of the monuments which have remained to us, as the richly adorned church, and stone cross at Tuam, and the beautiful specimen of jewellery now before us. These qualities are thus indicated in the record of his death preserved in the Book of Clonmacnoise, and the works of other annalists :

“ ‘ In the year 1156 Tordelbeach O’Conor, king of Connaught, Meath, Brefny, Munster, and all Ireland, the supreme head of the ranks and nobles of Ireland, the Augustus of the Western Europe, after having distributed and bequeathed all his precious household furniture, that is, his gold and silver vases, gems, and other such like valuables, his studs and cattle, his gaming utensils, his bow, quiver, and all other weapons, excepting his sword, shield, and goblet, with sixty-five ounces of gold and sixty marks of silver, among all and each of the churches, breathed his last at Dunmore, the nineteenth of May, the first of January preceding beginning on a Sunday, and was interred with all funeral pomp in the church of St. Kiaran, at Cluanmacnoise, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and fiftieth of his reign (from the time that he succeeded his brother Donald, in the year 1106).’

“ Of the archbishop, Muireadhach O’Duffy, the eminent ecclesiastic for whose use the shrine was made, our annalists have in like manner preserved many historical notices; and his acts, as recorded, exhibit a pleasing contrast to those of the ambitious monarch, for they are invariably conducive to humanity and peace. He appears, indeed, to have been a truly illustrious person, and in every way deserving of his great reputation.

“ As a specimen of his acts, and as showing the uses to which such reliques as this before us were applied in Ireland, I shall quote one or two entries in the Book of Clonmacnoise, as preserved to us in the quaint language of its translator, Connell Mac Geoghegan :

“ ‘ A. D. 1136, Rory (or Roderick) O’Conor and Uada

O'Concennan were put under arrest by Turlogh O'Connor, though under the protection of the coarb of St. Jarlath (*i. e.*, the archbishop of Tuam), and of O'Duffy, and of the *Bachall Buee*, or the yellow staff.'

"The relic here called the yellow staff I am inclined to believe was the shrine now before us, and so called popularly from its golden appearance.

"Again, in Mac Geoghegan, at the year 1139 :

" ' King Terlaugh took his own son prisoner. After that he gave him before upon these oaths and securities following, viz. (his own name was Rory O'Connor, that was afterwards king of Ireland), Moriegh O'Duffie, archbishop, with all the laymen and clergy of Connaught ; Teige O'Brien, king of Thomond ; Tiernan O'Roirke, king of the Brenie ; and Murrough Mac Gille ne-newe O'Fergall, chieftain of Annalie. They all, both clergy and laymen, fasted at Rathbrendan, to get the young prince out of the king's hands, and could not. Also King Terlaugh took Murrough O'Melaghlen, king of Meath, prisoner, after he had agreed with him that each of them would be true to one another, and seek no advantage or hindrance of each other. These were the oaths and sureties that were between them of either side for performance of said agreement, viz. :—The altar of St. Ciaran's shrine ; relics Norannagh ; two prelates of every severall houses ; together with Morrough O'Duffie, archbishop of Connaught ; primate of Ardmach ; the staff of Jesus, which St. Patrick brought into this kingdom ; the cowarb of St. Fechin's bell, and the boban of St. Kevin ; by all which sureties and oaths they were bound to each other not to seek advantage either by captivity, bynding, or encroaching upon each other's land, until apparent occasion had appeared to the sureties ; and notwithstanding all which Murrough was taken prisoner by K. Turlough, and kept for the space of a month, without any breach of his side, until at last he was enlarged at the intercession of the said prelates and noblemen that were sureties for him, whom they sent with safe conduct to Munster.'

“ The death of this distinguished man is thus recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters :

“ ‘ A. D. 1150. Muireadhach O’Duffy, archbishop of Connaught, the arch-senior of all Ireland in wisdom, in chastity, in the bestowal of gifts and food, died at Cong on the 16th day of May, at the festival of St. Brendan, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.’

“ The bishop, whose name is preserved in the third compartment of these inscriptions, as the person under whose superintendence the shrine was made, was also of distinguished celebrity in his time, and was, no doubt, of the same family with, and intimately related to the senior of Ireland.

“ Like the former, he was archbishop of Connaught, and also bishop or abbot of Clonmacnoise and Roscommon. His death is thus recorded in the Book of Clonmacnoise, as translated by Mac Geoghegan :—

“ ‘ A. D. 1136.—Donnell O’Duffy, archbishop of Connaught, and coarb of St. Ciarin, immediately after celebrating mass by himself, died, and was buried on St. Patrick’s Day, at Clonfert, where he died and celebrated the said mass.’

“ I should observe that it appears from our annals that this family of O’Duffy in Connaught appears to have been peculiarly ecclesiastical, or devoted to religion. The father of Donnell, that is, as the inscription states, Flanagan O’Duffy, was, as appears from our annals, abbot of Roscommon, and died in 1097. Another of his family, Florence O’Duffy, was bishop of Elphin, and died at Cong in 1168. Cadley, or Catholicus O’Duffy, was archbishop of Connaught, and attended as such at the synod held at Clonfert in 1170 ; and from an inscription on the market-cross, still remaining at Cong, which has not hitherto been deciphered, we find that it was erected by two of this name, who were abbots of that place.

“ Of the history of this shrine, subsequent to the time of its fabrication, our annalists are silent, and even the traditions of the place where it had been so long preserved have been erro-

neous and of no value. According to the account given me by Father Prendergast, the last abbot of Cong, and last representative in Connaught of the Augustinian Order, the cross was brought into Ireland and deposited at Cong, with the monks of that order, by St. Patrick, though the order did not exist till two centuries later, and was not established in Ireland for many ages afterwards. This, he said, was the historical tradition connected with it, and which he believed to be true ; and though I endeavoured, by reading to him the inscriptions carved upon the shrine, to convince him that such tradition was altogether erroneous, I found it impossible to make any impression upon him. But the want of any historical accounts of this shrine for so long a period is of little importance, as, from the fact recorded of the archbishop for whom it was made, that he died in the monastery of Cong, we may reasonably infer that the shrine was left by him in that great religious establishment, in which so many of his name and family subsequently ruled, and that it must have been preserved there till the final extinction of the Augustinian Order, as connected with Cong, in our own time. Father Prendergast further stated that the shrine, with a great number of the ancient manuscripts of the monastery, at the dissolution of the monastic houses in Ireland, had been concealed in an old oaken chest in a cottage of the village, and so remained till he became abbot, and took possession of them. But in this, also, he was probably in error, for the shrine must have been seen by the learned Humphrey Lloyd, during his tour in Connaught at the commencement of the eighteenth century, as he quotes and translates in his *Archæologia*, published in 1709, the inscription relative to Muireadhach O'Dubhthaigh as being carved upon it ; and this inscription is also given by the learned Dr. O'Brien in his Irish dictionary, though it is very probable that the bishop only quoted the passage from the work of the former. And hence it appears to me to be more probable that the concealment of the shrine and manuscripts,—which manuscripts, I regret to say, were subsequently destroyed,—

only took place and became necessary during the severe operation of the penal laws which were enacted in the reign of Anne.

“ I had intended to offer some observations to the Academy, on the value of this remain as a work of art, of native manufacture, anterior to the occupation of the country by the Anglo-Normans; but, having already trespassed too long on the time of the Academy, I shall defer such remarks to some future time, and conclude by expressing my thanks for the patience with which they have listened to this very hastily drawn up communication.”

JUNE 24TH, 1850.

THE REV. HUMPHREY LLOYD, D. D., PRESIDENT,
in the Chair.

RESOLVED, on the recommendation of the Council,—That the sum of £50 be placed at the disposal of the Council to purchase antiquities.

To which the following amendment was added :—“ And that in making this grant the Academy desires to express its opinion that the existing liabilities, if any, incurred by the Committee of Antiquities, should be discharged previously to the purchase of any further articles of antiquarian interest.”

The President read a letter from Jacob Grimm, who was recently elected an Honorary Member of the Academy, returning thanks for the honour conferred on him. The letter stated that the learned writer had been engaged in the study of the Irish language, with a view to the comparison of it with other European languages.
